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ABSTRACT

During the summer and fall orientation of 1972, a questionnaire prepared by the American Council on Education was administered to the incoming freshmen at the University of South Carolina and 527 other institutions of higher education. This report focuses on the item in the questionnaire in which the student was asked to indicate the importance of various influences in his decision to attend this particular college. The 5 reasons most often given for attending USC were: (1) has a good academic reputation; (2) wanted to live away from home; (3) special educational programs offered; (4) has a good athletic program; and (5) low tuition. On the national norms USC freshmen differed in only one item. The national norm freshmen reasons for attending a college were: (1) has a good academic reputation; (2) wanted to live away from home; (3) special educational programs offered; (4) low tuition; and (5) advice of someone who attended here. (HS)

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Division of Student Affairs

Subject: Major Influences in Deciding to Attend the University of South Carolina

Research Notes No. 11 March 15, 1973

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Division of Student Affairs

Research Notes
No. 11-73

March 15, 1973

SUBJECT: Major Influences in Deciding to Attend the University of South Carolina

Nature and Scope of the Study:

During summer and fall orientation of 1972, a questionnaire prepared by the American Council of Education was administered to the incoming freshmen at the University of South Carolina and 527 other institutions of higher education, including two-year colleges, four-year colleges and universities. The resulting summary data on entering freshmen included information on the entering freshmen at the University of South Carolina and weighted normative data based on questionnaire results from the forty-two participating universities. Similar data were also available for the freshman class of 1971.

The following is one in a series of reports drawn from analyses of these data. This report focuses on the item in the questionnaire in which the student was asked to indicate the importance of various influences in his decision to attend this particular college. The first part of the report examines the five most frequently mentioned major influences for the total USC freshman class and for the national university norms. Next, the responses for the USC freshman classes of 1971 and 1972 are compared. The report concludes by summarizing the chief findings of the questionnaire responses.

It is felt that analyses of these and other data obtained from the questionnaire data will be useful to faculty and staff members responsible for setting policy relative to recruitment, counseling, and advisement.

Table 1. Comparison of the Five Most Frequently Mentioned Major Influences in Deciding to Attend this College by 1972 USC Freshmen and National University Norms.

	USC FRESHMEN			NATIONAL UNIVERSITY NORMS	
Rank	Reason	%	Rank	Reason	%
1	Has a good academic reputation	43.4	1	Has a good academic reputation	60.9
2	Wanted to live away from home	24.0	2	Wanted to live away from home	27.1
3	Special educational programs offered	22.1	3	Special educational programs offered	26.7
4	Has a good athletic program	16.5	4	Low tuition	17.1
5	Low tuition	15.9	5	Advice of someone who attended here	16.1

COMMENTS:

1. "Has a good academic reputation" placed first for the USC freshmen and for the national university norms. The percentage of freshmen nationwide who reported academic reputation as the major reason for attending their college, however, was significantly higher (17.5%) than the percentage of USC freshmen responding in this manner.

2. The role of a good athletic program as a major influence in selecting a college was more important to USC freshmen than at the national level.

3. The choice of colleges by freshmen nationally is slightly more influenced by special educational programs offered, low tuition, and advice of alumni than is the choice of USC freshmen.

Table 2. Comparison of the Five Most Frequently Mentioned Major Influences in Deciding to Attend the University of South Carolina by 1971 and 1972 USC Freshmen Classes.

1971			1972		
Rank	Reason	%	Rank	Reason	%
1	Special educational programs offered	29.2	1	Has a good academic reputation	43.4
2	College has a good reputation	28.6	2	Wanted to live away from home	24.0
3	Low tuition	15.4	3	Special educational programs offered	22.1
4	Advice of someone who attended	14.4	4	Has a good athletic reputation	16.5
5	Relatives wanted me to go	8.8	5	Low tuition	15.9

COMMENTS:

1. "Has a good reputation" was the second most frequently mentioned influence in deciding to attend U.S.C. by freshmen in 1971. The phrasing of the response was changed slightly in 1972 to read "academic reputation," and the percentage of students reporting this answer rose significantly (14.6%).

2. "Has a good athletic program" and "wanted to live away from home" appeared on the questionnaire as a possible response for the first time in 1972. They both ranked high in significance in influencing a freshman to choose U.S.C. for college.

3. "Special educational programs offered" was the influence most frequently mentioned in deciding to attend U.S.C. by freshmen in 1971. The percentage of freshman mentioning this as a major influence dropped 7.1% in 1972 to become the third most frequently mentioned influence.

CONCLUSIONS:

Although the percentage of freshmen who attend U.S.C. because of its academic reputation is presently 17.5% lower than the national norm, the percentage appears to be rising and approaching the national percentage. Other than academic reputation, U.S.C. freshmen deviate most from the national norm in the degree of consideration given athletic programs in their selection of a college. 16.5% of entering U.S.C. freshmen considered "a good athletic program" as a major influence, while only 10.1% of the national freshmen considered it a major influence.